

*Turdus merula merula*, *Turdus merula cabreræ*, and *Turdus merula mauritanicus* recently described by him in his accounts of his travels, as well as examples of the continental and the British Robin, to show the differences between *Erithacus rubecula rubecula* and *Erithacus rubecula melophilus*.

A discussion ensued, in which Mr. Elwes, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Lort Phillips, Mr. Hartert, Mr. Butterfield, and others took part.

Mr. D. SETH-SMITH exhibited some specimens of the nestlings of *Turnix* and *Excalfactoria*, and made the following remarks :—

“The nesting-habits of the Hemipodes, or Bustard-Quails, being particularly interesting, I thought the members might like to hear that the young of the Indian Bustard-Quail (*Turnix tanki*) had lately been hatched in my aviary.

“*Turnix tanki* has only been imported alive to England on two or three occasions, so far as I am aware. The Zoological Society has only once possessed specimens, a pair having been presented by Mr. Harper, of Calcutta, in 1901, which lived only a few months.

“I was so fortunate as to secure three living specimens—a male and two females—in October last, and have noticed one or two very interesting points about the species.

“Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, in his monograph of the genus *Turnix*, published in the ‘Ibis’ of 1889 (pp. 446–475), in comparing the different species, says that ‘the black throats, the rufous nuchal collars, and such-like marks, which distinguish the adult females in the different groups, are not seasonal or nuptial plumages, as supposed by some authors, but denote maturity, and are to be found at all seasons in fully adult females.’

“Now in *Turnix tanki* the rufous collar is a very conspicuous feature of the adult female, and my two birds, when obtained early in October, were in full plumage, with this characteristic adornment well developed. In November, however, they moulted, and completely lost the rufous collar, and the sexes could then be only distinguished by

size. In March the breeding-plumage was gradually assumed again, and at the same time the two females began to get savage and had to be separated, one being left with the male in a large aviary in which an even temperature of about 60° Fahr. was maintained. On April 25th I discovered one egg in a slight nest of hay close to the door. On the 27th a second egg was laid, and a third on the following day. The male then took possession of the nest (April 28th) and commenced to sit steadily, the female from this time taking no further notice of the nest, but going about, apparently in search of another husband.

“On May 10th all three eggs hatched, about ten days before they were expected, incubation having lasted *twelve days* only, which is very remarkable considering that the young, when hatched, are as well developed and clothed with down as any of the young of the true Quails. I may remark that the young of *Excalfactoria chinensis*, which are of much the same size, and certainly more fully-developed at birth, take 21 days to hatch.

“On account of the very cold weather it was almost impossible to provide a sufficient quantity of insect-food, and artificial food they would not touch, so that unfortunately two of the chicks died; and I have much pleasure in exhibiting them here to-night. The third is alive and doing well. At ten days old, it is nearly fully feathered and can fly.

“I have also brought up for exhibition a mounted chick of *Excalfactoria chinensis* only four days old, and one of the Australian form, *E. lineata*, of about the same age, in order to show the extent to which the young of these two forms differ in colour, the young of the typical *E. chinensis* having very distinct buff lines down the back, these lines being absent in the Australian form, the chick being almost entirely black.”

MR. E. LORT PHILLIPS exhibited a remarkably beautiful cinnamon variety of a Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticula*) which had been shot at Milford, Co. Donegal, Ireland, on the 19th January, 1903. This specimen had been presented to the British Museum.